

"One Nation Under Which God?"

Text: Exodus 32:4b, "and they said, These are thy gods O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." Exodus 20:3, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

For our Scripture we read the story of the giving of the Ten Commandments, but a few short chapters later we learn of the disobedience of the Israelites. In the 32nd chapter of Exodus we read of the impatience ~~of~~ of the people, as well as their discontent. They were awaiting the return of Moses from Mt. Sinai.

God had miraculously delivered the people from the hands of their harsh taskmasters, the Egyptians, by the crossing of the Red Sea. After they had been brought into this new land they had immediately encountered difficulty in following God completely. ~~xx~~ They had been in the wilderness only 3 days and they encountered bitter water, and they cried against Moses for leading them there. So Moses called upon God and God showed him a tree which he cast into the waters and they became sweet. Thus they knew that God was sufficient for all their needs. But now they were encamped at the foot of Mt. Sinai and Moses was taking such a long time to come back.

Moses was in conversation with God getting not only the Ten Commandments, but instructions about the building of the Ark of the Covenant. But in their impatience they turned completely against God and had Aaron make them a golden ~~xif~~ calf which they could worship. They had to have a god they could see and thus be assured the god did not leave them. After Aaron had made this idol they said, "These are thy gods O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." By this declaration they gave evidence of having completely forgotten which god it was who brouth them up out ~~thexek~~ of the land of Egypt.

Then if we read on in this chapter we see that God becomes angry with His people and He would destroy them. But Moses interceded for them and only by his pleading that the death of all these people would cause God's name to be looked upon as being deceitful and dishonest, prevents

God from exacting a just death upon all of them. After Moses returned to the Israelites camp and melted down the golden calf, and spread it in their drinking water and made them drink it, he then called for those who in the camp who were on the Lord's side. These he ordered to slay the unbelievers among them, and this they did.

But even after this Moses went up again on the Mt, and pleaded with God to forgive their iniquity. God promised to blot out ~~xxx~~ from His book those who had sinned against Him. But He also promised to visit them in their wilderness wanderings. In the 35th verse of this chapter we read, "And the Lord plagued the people, because they ~~were~~ made the calf which Aaron made." So from this we can say that when there is sin, there must be punishment.

Now from all of this we can draw some very strange parallels for these United States of America. This country was founded by men and women who were literally driven here by harsh and cruel taskmasters in England Holland and Germany.

A teacher asked he class why the pilgrims came to America, and one little boy answered, "To worship God in their own way, and make other people do the same."

Now he had it partially right, but it was to worship God as they pleased without anyone telling them how and when ~~to~~ to do it. Thus this country was founded upon religious freedom as one of the main ~~xxx~~ principles for its founding.

When we look at the history of this nation we see that we had the equivalent of quite a few Moses among us. Men like Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, ~~xxxxxx~~ and Lincoln to name a few. Men such as these who led us out of the wilderness of religious oppression, inhumanity to ~~xxx~~ men, inequality among races and so on. Men who looked to God the author and creator of all mankind. Men who strove diligently to incorporate into the very constitution, safeguards for all of the people, to protect them against others making us slaves. We have seen this country

risecto be a world power in less than 200 years. A nation that has set standards and been unsurpassed in production from everything ~~is~~ such as growing more corn per acre to canopeners. A nation that has reached out in all directions in daring feats of exploration. A nation that has been blessed by more wealth and prosperity than any other nation in the history of the world.

But alas, like that ancient nation of Israel we have made for ourselves golden calves which we have begin to worship in the past few generations and we have slowly but surely turned our backs upon our creator. We have said as they once did, "These are thy gods O America, which brought thee up out of the land of the unknown." And we have bowed down to them and worshiped them.

If we look about us we can see the gods we have made. It has become such an ingrained thing in our nation that it has reached the so called grass roots level, and no one of us can point the finger and say "thou art the man" as Nathan once pointed the finger and said to King David. We all have our own little gods in our lives, perhaps some of us have one a little more than some others, but we all have them. We have made gods of wealth, and power. Gods of building and loans and banks. Stocks and bonds, land investments, land development. We have gods of iron and steel, buildings for rent and sale. We have power equipment gods of tractors, and cars and motor bikes, and motor cycles. We have gods of tents and trailers and campers and swimming pools. We have gods of liquor and tobacco, and sex and other peoples husbands and wives. ~~All~~ All of these are the golden calves that America has been bowing down ~~to~~ to more and more each year.

We have finally reached the point where a group of people in the name of protecting us from another political party or person, have used all sorts of crroked means to insure that we are protected. Thus we have a stinking mess we call simply Watergate. The party out of ~~power~~ power thus uses this as a wedge to smear whatever vestige of respectability

our present president has, hoping ~~that~~ they may cover their own tracks, and we will forget they had their Lyndon Johnson, and Kennedy scandals. But all of this proves that Mr. Nixon, or Mr. Kennedy, or Mr. Johnson is no better, nor no worse than any of us. We have let all of this happen because we are all only interested in ourselves and our own greed for things.

If any of us disbelieve this we only need ask some questions. Why do we have inflation? Because the dealers and sellers want to make the most they can for their products. Why do we have such high rents and interest and mortgage rates? Because the investors big and little want the most return on their investments. Thus we can question all areas of our society and the answers are all the same, "These are Thy gods O America, ~~that~~ which brought thee up out of the land of the unknown."

But what does God say to all of this and all through this. He is still ~~not~~ saying today as He did then, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." We once prided ourselves on being, "One nation under God." We took so much pride in this that we even added it to the pledge of allegiance. But we must ask today because of the conditions in our nation, "One nation under ~~which~~ God?" Is it the God of hatred, or of power, or of wealth, or of greed, of sex, of overindulgence in food and drink and drugs? Is it the god of powerful senators, or presidents whose snap of the finger can have instant response?

We have come to such a point in our nation where we refuse to give God a few hours of our time each week. We have time for everythin but God. Let special services be called in our churches and people grumble and moan that the church is out to make money every time you turn around. But did you notice we did not ask for an offering tonight? We did not ask not because we were afraid to have one, but simply because the purpose of this service is not to take up a collection, but instead to collect ourselves together to pray to God for our nation and our people.

The handwriting is on the wall my friends. We need to either change our course in our nation in so many areas, or we are doomed.

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
BUTLER, PENNSYLVANIA

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST JUNE 30, 1974
REV. RALPH C. LINK, PASTOR
MRS. VELMA COLLINS, ORGANIST
MR. RALPH COOPER, CHOIR DIRECTOR
PAM FRY, ELLEN MASTER - ACOLYTE

ORDER OF WORSHIP 7:30 P.M.
PRELUDE: "PRELUDE IN A MAJOR" PERRY

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN #443 "O BEAUTIFUL FOR SPACIOUS SKIES"

*CALL TO WORSHIP

*INVOCATION

RESPONSIVE READING NO. 72 PAGE 619

HYMN NO. 439 "GOD BLESS OUR NATIVE LAND"

(ANNOUNCEMENTS)

OFFERING OFFERTORY: "PASTORALE" BRUBACH

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM: JOHN LAVERNE PENROD - SON OF
Mr. & Mrs. HARRY PENROD.

Solo: "I'LL WALK WITH GOD" BY BRODSKY - SANDY COTTAGE
PIANO ACCOMPANIST: Deb MELTON

SCRIPTURE: Exodus 20: 1-21

SERMON: "ONE NATION UNDER WHICH GOD?"

*GLORIA PATRI

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION FOR OUR NATION AND OUR PEOPLE

*HYMN No. 63 "OUR GOD, OUR HELP IN AGES PAST"

*BENEDICTION

*THREEFOLD AMEN

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*POSTLUDE: "ALLEGRO" MALLARD
----- *CONGREGATION STANDING -----

THE LOVELY FLOWERS ON THE ALTAR HAVE BEEN PLACED BY
MR. & MRS. CHARLES FENAR IN MEMORY OF FAM PFLUGH.
SERVING AS USHERS TODAY ARE: ALVIN TAIT, JAMES
MCCLYMONDS, MIKE NAZARUK AND GEORGE PFLUGH.
DEACON AND MRS. CHARLES FENAR WILL BE OFFICIAL GREETERS
AT THE DOOR TODAY REPRESENTING COUNCIL.

NURSERY WILL BE PROVIDED TODAY BY MRS. JOHN REDMAN
AND PAULA STEPHENSON.

HOSPITALIZED: MRS. VIRGINIA BEATTY, MR. W. A. WINTERS,
MR. WILMER PEARCE.

AUGUST 25 IS OPEN FOR MEMORIAL FLOWERS AS WELL AS FOUR
SUNDAYS IN SEPT. - 1, 15, 22, 29 AND SOME OTHER DATES
THROUGH OUT THE PERIOD OF JULY THRU DEC. - IF YOU
WANT A SPECIAL SUNDAY - LET US KNOW NOW.

>>> DUE TO THE HOLIDAY WEEKEND THERE WILL BE NO COUNCIL
MEETING IN JULY - NOTICE WAS IN THE NEWSLETTER OF

JUNE - NEXT MEETING WILL BE IN AUGUST.

ACCORDING TO WORD RECEIVED - REV. AND MRS. LEE
NEUHAUS AND THEIR SONS KURT AND JON WILL BE VISITING
IN BUTLER LATE IN JULY AT OUR HOME. WE ARE PLANNING
AN OPEN HOUSE ON JULY 31 FROM 7-9 P.M. SO THAT ANY OF
YOU WHO WANT TO SAY "HELLO" CAN DO SO. LEE AND KATHY
ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO THIS CHANCE TO SEE MANY OF
THEIR FRIENDS HERE. - GENE AND MARILYN STEPHENSON.

>>> NEXT SUNDAY - HOLY COMMUNION - NEW MEMBERS WILL BE

TAKEN INTO THE CHURCH AT THIS TIME.

REMEMBER - CHURCH FAMILY PICNIC - ALAMEDA PARK -

SHELTER CLOSEST SWIMMING POOL - WED. JULY 24 AT 6:00
P. M. - SPONSORED BY THE LAY LIFE AND WORK COMMITTEE.

BAPTISM THIS AFTERNOON - 2:00 P.M. - 8 yr. OLD SON - RYAN
SCOTT OF MR. & MRS. JOHN STEVENSON AND THEIR DAUGHTER -
KELLY JO ANN STEVENSON. MICHELLE RENE WILLIAMS -

DAUGHTER OF MR. & MRS. JOHN WILLIAMS.

CONFIRMATION CLASS CAMP REGISTRATIONS ARE DUE IN TODAY
\$20.00 WILL BE PAID BY THE CHURCH AND \$15.00 IS TO
ACCOMPANY THE REGISTRATION FROM THE PARENTS. IF YOU
BY ANY CHANCE FORGET TO BRING THIS WITH YOU TODAY -
PLEASE LEAVE US KNOW IN THE OFFICE.

WELCOME ALL VISITORS

{ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 }

From all this can draw strange parallels USA 2/
Country founded men women driven here by harsh
cruel taskmasters, Holland, England, Germany

Teacher asked class, "Why pilgrims come America?"
Willie answered, "To worship God in their own way,
and make other people do the same."

(
He partially right,
it was to worship God as they pleased, in freedom
thus country founded relig freedom
1 of main principles of founding

Look at hist. of nation see few Moses among us
Men like, Wash, Jeff, Franklin, Lincoln name few
Men like these led out of wilderness relig oppress
inhuminty man, inequality races so on
Men who looked God as author creator all mankind
Men who strove diligent incorporate into constit
safeguards all peop, to protect against others
making us slaves.

Have seen Country rise world power less 200 yrs
Nation set standards unsurpassed in production
of everything from more corn per acre, to canopener
nation reached cut all direct feats of daring
exploration

Nation gone moon back, nation blessed more wealth
than any other nation in history of world

But alas, like ancient Is, we made golden calves in
past few generations
have slowly, surely turned backs upon creator
we have said, "These are thy gods O America,
which brought thee up out of the land of the unkno
We have bowed to them and worshiped theq

It look around can see them
has become such ingrained thing in nation, it has
reached grass roots level, ~~but~~ All ^{involve}
& no one of us can point finger & say, "Thou art
the man," as Nathan once pointed and said

We all have own little gods in our lives,
perhaps some more than others, but all have them

These gods wealth, power,
gods banks, building loans, houses buildings, apts
gods stocks, bonds, investments, land develop
gods iron, steel, concrete buying, selling
gods power equip, tractors, cars, motpr bikes, cycle
gods tents, campers, trailers, swimming pools, ~~boats~~
gods, sex, liquor, tobacco, other husbands, wives
NOT RAO IN SELF, BUT WE GONE EXTREMES.

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few short chaps later read disobeid of Isrites
chap 32 Ex, read of peop impatience,
also of discontent
as they wait Moses return Mt. Sinai

God miraculously delivered from hands of Egyptians
by crossinf Red Sea.

Immediately in new land, only there 3 day,
have difficutly.
encountered bitter water, cried against Moses
bringing them there
Moses call on God, God shows tree,
he casts into water, water become sweet.
Thus should know God all sufficient for needs

They now encamped foot Mt. Sinai

Moses converse God, not only 10 C
but instructions bild ark covenant & ^{A&M}
In their impatience, turned completely against G
Had Aaron make golden calf from rings, etc

had no god could see & must see be assured he with
them

After Aaron make idol they say, (TEXT)
If this declar give evidence forgot which God
brot up from E.

If read on this chap see God angry, would destroy,
But Moses intercede & name of God not tarnished
in Egypt elsewhere
Moses return, melt calf, put in water, make drinl
Call, "Who on Lord's Side?"

these ordered slay unbeliever, this they did

Even after Moses again go up Mt plead with God,
God promise blot out names from His book those
sinned against Him.

Also promise visit them in wilderness wanderings
in 35th ve read, "And the Lord plagued the peop
because they made the calf which Aaron made."
We see from this, must be punishment for sin

Shirley & Ralph Charles Link, Nancy Link, Dale with Lianne his wife, Lloyd Link with Karen his wife
Jessica in front of Ralph C. Link
Ethan and Alica in front of R. Dale and Lianne Link (the eldest son & family)









Ralph C. Link
153 Keck Road
Sarver, Pa. 16055
(412) 352-1103

Born: April 9, 1929, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Married: December 15, 1951

Wife: Shirley Margaret Neill

Born: December 8, 1930, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Children: Ralph Dale Link, born May 11, 1955, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Lloyd Alan Link, born May 28, 1958, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Nancy Lynn Link, born March 15, 1961, Butler, Pa.

SCHOOLING:

Graduated from Perry High School, Pittsburgh, Pa.
June 1947

Lay Ministry School, Penn West Conference of United
Church of Christ, September 1965 to May 1969

Commissioned Lay Minister June 1969

Lancaster Theological Seminary, Lancaster, Pa.,
September 1970

Graduated from Lancaster Theological Seminary May 1974

Ordained to Christian Ministry March 10, 1974

PASTORATES:

As Lay Minister: short term, 1 month or less in
various churches 1965 to 1967

Emlenton Lamartine Charge of United Church of Christ
1967 to 1969

Short term in various churches 1970 until Seminary
entrance July 1970

July 1970 to December 1973 Student Pastor at Trinity
Charge, New Bloomfield, Duncannon, Pa., Penn Central
Conference, United Church of Christ

December 1973 to present, St. Paul's United Church of
Christ, Butler, Pa., Penn West Conference, United
Church of Christ

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

OF

Ralph C. Link

I am the youngest of five children. I was born just prior to the onset of the Depression. Our family was very poor. My father was an alcoholic and my mother was a very religious person who was searching for the Lord. During my childhood she did her best to teach me the things of the Lord. Later in life she came to a personal relationship with Him.

I grew up in the Evangelical and Reformed Church where salvation by grace alone was not preached nor taught. I knew all about Jesus, what He did, how He lived, His miracles, His death and resurrection, but I didn't know Him personally.

My life had many ups and downs and all the while I was attending church and striving with my good works to please God. At a very low point in my life when we were deeply in debt and my wife and three children were all ill, I came to the crossroads. I watched a Billy Graham Crusade on television from some distant city and the message he preached seemed to be directed right at me. I wrestled with making that commitment to Christ, but didn't. The next afternoon and evening at work on the 4 to 12 shift I came to the conclusion that I needed to make that commitment to Christ. It seemed like there was no other choice if life was to have any meaning. That night when I came home from work at 1:00 A.M., I laid face down on the living room floor and told God that I couldn't live my life in my own strength and I accepted the gift of salvation from my Savior Jesus Christ. My life has never been the same.

Through several meaningful circumstances I was called by God to serve Him in the Christian Ministry and to help spread that wonderful message of salvation through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. What a wonderful and rewarding time it has been and I give Him all the praise for my salvation and the opportunity to serve Him.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

OF

Ralph C. Link

I believe the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired inerrant Word of God. I believe the Bible is the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men and it is the final authority for the Christian faith and life.

I believe in one God, who is eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I believe in the Diety of the Lord Jesus Christ that He is true God and true man. I believe that He was born of the Virgin Mary, that He lived in sinless life, that He performed the miracles recorded in Scripture, that He died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins, that He bodily arose from the dead, that He ascended on high where He is at the right hand of Almighty God as our intercessor.

I believe in the Holy Spirit and that He comes and indwells each believer at the time of conversion. I believe that He lives in each believer to lead, to instruct, and to convict so that a believer may live a more godly life.

I believe that through the shed blood of Jesus Christ and through His resurrection, this is the only ground for justification and salvation for all who receive Him A Lord and Savior and to such as receive Him, they are born of the Holy Spirit and become children of God.

I believe water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of the Church but are not means of salvation.

I believe in the personal and premillennial and imminent coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I believe in the resurrection of the dead, for the believer to resurrection of life and joy with the Lord, for the unbeliever to resurrection of judgement and everlasting punishment.